

WHAT LEADERSHIP ROLES ARE REQUIRED

What Leadership Roles Are Required

For Today's Fire Chief?

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Abstract

The Irving Fire Department has undergone five changes in executive leadership in less than two decades, resulting in misunderstanding of leadership roles, expectations, and responsibilities among department members. The purpose of this research is to examine a Fire Chief's leadership roles, responsibilities, and expectations for unifying the department to better serve the community.

The descriptive research methodology was utilized to collect relevant information related to the recognition, organization, and development of leadership roles, and to analyze that information in the context of this research's purpose and following research questions: (a) what are the expectations on the Fire Chief from the community and the department; (b) what are the Fire Chief's responsibilities to the community and the department; and (c) what are the Fire Chief's roles required to unify the department?

A Fire Service Leadership Survey and personal interviews were conducted and then utilized to evaluate department personnel's expectations on the attributes, traits, skills, and leadership roles required of a Fire Chief.

It was determined that the Fire Chief must formulate operational objectives into a decided advantage for the department, and that leading the department through the decision making process requires dedication, concentration, knowledge, and skill.

It was recommended that the Fire Chief demonstrate the personal attributes of vision, foresight, inspiration, and the setting of standards that will unify the organization, and that a Fire Chief's job description should include an evaluation of those leadership skills needed to serve the department and community. The integration of the Fire Chief's leadership roles directed towards unifying the department in obtaining the vision and mission objectives must be well documented and thoroughly understood.

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Fire service organizations are facing a common and very serious issue as several of their senior officers retire with no replacements adequately prepared to assume those positions. In many organizations promotions are based on seniority or "next-in-line" succession that can lead to the advancement of personnel who are great test-takers and who know fire tactics, but do not have the leadership competencies that will inspire followers in their organizations. Without well designed leadership development fire departments could find themselves in need of senior officers and have no qualified applicants, (Corporate Perspectives Inc., 2007).

For today's Fire Chief, leadership must transform fire and emergency services organizations from being reactive to proactive through emphasis on development in prevention and risk-reduction, transformation of fire and emergency services organizations to reflect the communities they represent, and executive-level knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to embrace diversity, conduct research, and engage in lifelong learning, (U.S. Fire Administration [USFA], 2010a).

It is the responsibility of all chief officers to acquire a strong understanding and ability to work with not only fire service personnel, but also community officials, other departments, and the citizens they serve. They must understand individual behavior, how best to motivate individuals as well as groups, and how to positively manage conflict at every level of the organization. The ability to understand and work within the organization depends on understanding the challenges of leadership, ethical application of ideals through the building of leadership teams, and by communicating the leadership message effectively, (University of Missouri, 2009).

The Irving Fire Department (IFD) is responding to these challenges by incorporating a value driven leadership program that reinforces positive attitudes, professionalism and quality

of work, a commitment to service, teamwork, innovation, and personal and professional development.

The problem this research addressed was that the Irving Fire Department has undergone five changes in executive leadership in less than two decades, resulting in misunderstanding of leadership roles, expectations, and responsibilities among department members. The purpose of this research is to examine a Fire Chief's leadership roles, responsibilities, and expectations for unifying the department to better serve the community.

The descriptive research methodology will be utilized to collect relevant information related to the recognition, organization, and development of leadership roles, and to analyze that information in the context of this research's purpose and following research questions: (a) what are the expectations on the Fire Chief from the community and the department; (b) what are the Fire Chief's responsibilities to the community and the department; and (c) what are the Fire Chief's roles required to unify the department?

Background and Significance

To develop skill in leadership processes fire service leaders must understand the complexities and differences of management and leadership. The management of any business concern is the organization of human activity to accomplish a prescribed set of goals and objectives through planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling activities of the organization's personnel. These processes involve the deployment and manipulation of human, financial, technological, and natural resources, (Wikipedia, 2010b).

"Leadership is stated as the process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task,"(Introduction, ¶ 1). It is a highly significant aspect of the organization's context, but it is difficult to define because definitions can vary depending on the current situation. Leadership expresses the capacity of an individual to listen and comprehend, observe without bias, and facilitate an opportunity for

dialog between all levels of decision makers in establishing processes, values, and visions without imposing them. It allows for the setting of agendas to identify problems and initiate change for significant improvement in the organization, (Wikipedia, 2010b).

Extensive research and formal study to determine the foundations and characteristics of an effective leader has been on-going for centuries. Some of history's most significant philosophical writings, such as Plato's *Republic* and Plutarch's *Lives*, have delved into the question of what are the particular distinguishing characteristics that identify an individual as a leader, (Wikipedia, 2010a). More recently, studies from virtually every discipline with an interest in effective leadership, such as business and educational administration, history, organization behavior, modern philosophy, social and political science, psychology, and theology, have been conducted to produce an authoritative overview of leadership. However, there are numerous arguments that modern studies are seriously flawed because no one has satisfactorily defined what leadership actually is, and those that have attempted to define it have let their particular educational discipline bias the subsequent definition, (Schultz, 2009).

Despite the apparent conflict in describing the specifics of leadership, interest in leadership grew from the early twentieth century through the 1980's. Leadership theories that concentrated on the qualities that distinguish leaders from followers were developed. Even though numerous leadership theories that examined environmental variables such as situational factors and skill were developed, most were classified as one of eight theories.

First, the Great Man theory of the 1900's assumed that leadership skills were an innate ability and that certain individuals were born to lead. Leadership was considered an art that only a fortunate few had the inherent genius to perform. Because leadership was considered as a male quality, the term Great Man was used, (Schultz, 2009; Cherry, 2010).

Second, during the 1940's trait theories were developed that were similar to the Great Man theory, but assumed that in addition to certain qualities some inherent traits were also

necessary to give an individual the capacity to become a leader. During World War II, significance was attributed to the traits theory as to what traits were necessary for military leaders to win the war, (Schultz, 2009; Cherry, 2010).

Third, contingency theories developed in the 1960's and 1970's, focused on the environmental variables that might influence or dictate the appropriate leadership style best suited for a particular situation. The theory was developed under the assumption that it would not be possible to determine which leadership attributes resulted in effective leadership, but rather which behavioral patterns produced the best results in specific situations or within a given context. As such, no single leadership style was appropriate for every situation, and success depended on leadership style, follower's capabilities, and the current situation, (Schultz, 2009; Cherry, 2010).

Fourth, situational theories, also developed in the 1960's and 1970's, established which leadership behaviors were more apt to succeed in a given situation, and that leaders should choose the most appropriate action based on the current situation, (Schultz, 2009; Cherry, 2010).

Fifth, behavioral theories were based on the assumption that leadership capabilities are acquired through training, observation, and development rather than being inherent. If processes could be defined by desirable actions and then learning to act in the same manner, then it would be much easier than adopting certain inborn traits or capabilities, (Schultz, 2009; Syque, 2007).

Sixth, participative theories focused on the input and involvement of others that ultimately were to be held accountable for the outcomes of the decision-making process. Individuals as well as group members were believed to be more committed to performance, be less competitive, and more collaborative when involved in pertinent decisions. Participative

theories also acknowledged the social commitment to one another resulting in deeper commitment to a decision, (Schultz, 2009; Syque, 2007).

Seventh, management or transactional theories are more aligned with the current roles of supervision, organization, and overall performance. Transactional theories rely on the assumption that social systems work best with a concise chain of command, and employees, when compliant and successful are rewarded, and when unsuccessful are disciplined or penalized. Once personnel have agreed to perform a certain job or function, they concede authority to their supervisor and submit to his or her demands. In return, the subordinate receives a salary and other benefits, (Schultz, 2009; Syque, 2007).

Eighth, relationship or transformational theories focus on the association and mutual attributes of leaders and followers. Success is driven by enthusiasm and energy to motivate and inspire others to visualize the greater good and to perform at a higher level more consistent with an individual's full potential. It is a relationship built on trust, vision, and forward thinking that raises one another to greater fulfillment, (Schultz, 2009; Syque, 2007).

The significance of the evolution of leadership theory is the culmination of ideas from numerous disciplines into alternative theories that infuse values and purpose into the organization. Unlike the previous theories primarily directed by management and psychology disciplines and dominated by a hierarchical, linear, male, and pragmatic perspective, alternative excellence theories allow for the interaction of traits, behaviors, key situations, and group facilitation to lead organizations. These new theories allow chief officers to examine leadership as a function of influence, as a personal attribute, and as an exchange of ideals based on the strength of relationships, bargaining ability, tradeoffs, and the ability to compromise, (Schultz, 2009).

This study is justified from the perspective that fire service leaders must understand how their leadership roles have changed to accommodate the diverse, multi-generational

workforce of today's fire organizations. Organizational leadership based on the six core convictions of service, action and reflection, relationship building, risk taking beyond conventional boundaries, inspiration, and self knowledge of ethics, integrity, and authenticity, will direct the fire service through past conventions of behavior. It will promote a connection for generational and diversity issues and provide an opportunity to establish credibility, create an environment where individuals and their ideas may thrive, establish the necessity to perform certain actions in a specific manner, and a venue to lead by exemplary example, (Carnegie Mellon Student Campus, 2009).

This study is relevant to the R125 Executive Leadership coursework of the National Fire Academy in developing the framework of executive-level competencies by focusing on their personal effectiveness through effective leadership. Leadership development and the successful infusion of the values and purpose of the organization will assist chief officers in developing the ability to conceptualize and employ other key processes used by chief officers to effectively supervise the actions and activities of the fire service organization, (Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA], 2005).

The issue of effective leadership relates to and supports the United States Fire Administration's objective to respond appropriately in a timely manner to emerging issues. Effective leadership will assist in the successful completion of reducing risk at the local level through prevention and mitigation, improving local planning and preparedness, improving the fire and emergency services' capability for response to and recovery from all hazards, and improving the fire and emergency services professional status, (U.S. Fire Administration [USFA], 2010b).

Literature Review

R. Heifetz and M. Linsky describe leadership and the process of leading as a dangerous endeavor because you are challenging your personnel's daily habits, management tools, organizational and personal loyalties, and thought processes with no guarantees. Often, leaders must exceed their established authority to meet these challenges before them; however, the risk is justified when the goals of the organization supersede any material gains of the individual or self advancement, (2002).

To more thoroughly define their leadership roles a Fire Chief must consider, what are the expectations on the Fire Chief from the community and the department? K.J. Cochran, Fire Chief of the Atlanta Fire Rescue Department, expects that Fire Chiefs, "...must have personal attributes, specific traits, and skills that contribute to managerial effectiveness and advancement", (n.d., p10).

To meet expectations effective fire service leaders must develop the personal attributes that will guide and encourage growth in the organization. These expectations include having vision, entrepreneurial foresight, inspiration, clear and specific standards, organizational capabilities, understanding, and being able to measure and interpret results.

Vision is the driving force and motivation that directs the purpose and reason for the existence of the organization. It provides a visualization of the fully developed program. Entrepreneurial skill and foresight guides the overall visualization processes to organizational development without being constrained by daily details. Competent leaders have a profound effect on others by inspiring them to commit to and fulfill that vision, without being required to possess all the appropriate skills to perform specific functions, (Roworth, 2010).

The fire service leader must be capable of establishing the desired and acceptable level of performance. If not formally prepared, employees will follow the example of the leader,

formal or informal, perceived or actual, and the end result may or may not be the desired outcome. Establishing performance standards must follow a uniform method that allows activities and actions to be well organized, safe, and efficient, (Roworth, 2010).

Intense effort should be devoted to understanding not only the needs of the department, but also those of the employees. A deeper understanding and concentrated effort to fulfill personnel and organizational needs will further motivate the entire workforce in achieving desired outcomes. Fire service leaders should be proficient in measuring the results of organizational activities to better facilitate or redirect personnel's efforts towards the successful accomplishment of desired goals, and thus the completion of the organization's mission, (Roworth, 2010).

The desired traits or ideals that may be applied, and should be expected in today's fire service environment are good judgment, prompt and decisive decision making, impartial and consistent justice, initiative, dependability, tact, integrity, endurance, consistent bearing or favorable impression, unselfishness, courage, knowledge, loyalty and enthusiasm, (Gorham, n.d.).

Today's leaders must have the ability to review and analyze pertinent facts and possible alternative solutions to make well-reasoned decisions. Decisions should be made promptly and announced in a clear and certain manner. Compliance to these decisions should be based in a justice system that rewards or punishes in accordance with the merits of the situation, and should be consistent and without prejudice or favoritism, (Gorham, n.d.).

Strong initiative is needed when quick actions are required particularly in situations where no orders or procedures are given, but where dependability in the proper performance of any action is a necessity. All actions must be performed with integrity and strength of character in the qualities of truthfulness and honesty. When mistakes are made, leaders must deal with

subordinates in a tactful manner and not create a hostile environment. Effort should be made to preserve the respect, acknowledge the responsibility, and maintain the accountability of every member of the organization, (Gorham, n.d.).

Today's leaders are expected to have the endurance to maintain a healthy mental and physical presence to effectively deal with the stresses and hardships of managing. They must continually present a favorable impression of confidence, ability, and appropriate personal conduct. They must also possess the courage to face criticism, warranted or fabricated, with self restraint and quiet determination, (Gorham, n.d.).

Finally, fire service leaders must be confident in their knowledge of the industry, their operating environment, and the capacity of their organization. They must remain loyal to the performance of their duties, and maintain an enthusiastic approach to the fulfillment of their requirements, (Gorham, n.d.).

The third component of understanding the expectations for today's chief officers is the leadership skills that are the guidelines to one's own leadership behavior and learning. Numerous ideals have been discussed that promote the alignment of team members around an organization's values and strategy to build unity in a time of change, however, these ideals can be expressed in terms of ten basic skills for outstanding leadership. These skills are integrity, vision / strategy, communication, relationship building, persuasion, adaptability, teamwork, coaching and development, decision making, and planning, (What-are-good-leadership-skills.com [WAGLS], 2007).

The foundations of integrity are uncompromising honesty and strong guiding principles that equate to treating others in such a manner as you wish them to treat you in return. Integrity is believed to be the most essential tool for developing the trust required to instill the beliefs and values that will guide members of the organization in their thinking, attitudes, and actions. Establishing a strong alliance based on trust will fortify the vision and strategies of the

organization and its direction for the long term. Fire service leaders must be able to refer to the organization's vision, mission, and values and communicate those ideals to encourage advancement, ([WAGLS], 2007).

Relationship building is based on an individual's personal power rather than a function of their position. It is often referred to as schmoozing, and is developed from strong interpersonal and group communication abilities. Strong communication skills not only inform, but also seek out information that focuses members of the organization towards common goals. Continually encouraging these relationships will help develop exceptional networking skills that will enhance the ability to influence and direct others in a desired direction. The ability to influence or persuade others correlates directly with the level of trust, interpersonal communication, and the strength of the relationships that have been developed, ([WAGLS], 2007).

To successfully maintain these relationships, leaders must be adaptable and flexible in response to the needs of today's highly diverse workforce. They must be able to reevaluate changing circumstances to exploit every opportunity for teamwork. In securing the best opportunities for teamwork, leaders can maintain a cohesive unit with different skill sets that can function together to accomplish desired outcomes. Developing and encouraging team members to improve their performance through coaching and nurturing will better prepare them for additional and more challenging assignments, ([WAGLS], 2007).

Wading through the enormous volume of information and being able to determine the relevancy of the material will determine the effectiveness of a leader's decision-making capabilities. Acting too quickly and not considering alternatives, or too slowly so that an opportunity may pass will impede the process and affect the actions taken. Today's actions and assumptions about future events will guide and focus leadership's direction of the organization's strategic planning, ([WAGLS], 2007).

The personal attributes, traits, and skills that identify key characteristics of a successful leader also define the expectations of the community and the department for a Fire Chief. The expectation is that he will be honest, forward-looking, competent, inspiring, and intelligent, (Shead, M., 2007, January 3). They will maintain a level of achievement to continually benefit the community, the organization, and its members. Personal success will be subordinate to the success of others in improving the fire department, and enhancing the quality of life for the community, (Cochran, n.d.).

After examining the expectations of the community and the department for a Fire Chief, consideration must be given to the fundamental responsibilities of that officer to manage and direct all fire fighting operations, fire prevention initiatives, and other fire services. What are the Fire Chief's responsibilities to the community and the department? The Fire Chief is usually under the direction of the city manager, and is responsible for directing the overall operations of the department by the most efficient and effective use of personnel and equipment to minimize or eliminate the threats to life safety, property damage, or environmental catastrophe, (City of Phoenix [COP], 2010; Government of the Northwest Territories [GNT], 2005).

Fire Chiefs must study and comprehend the needs of the community to provide adequate services that are in accordance with community bylaws, state and federal legislation, and the industry standards, ([GNT], 2005). They must plan and oversee all activities of the department such as establishing the appropriate firefighting techniques and strategies, ensuring adherence to policies and procedures, and introducing changes that provide a more efficient and safe environment. They must also implement plans and periodic reviews of departmental short and long term goals by developing general policies and guidelines for the administration of the department, ([COP], 2010; [GNT], 2005).

Fire Chiefs must take responsibility for the preparation of annual budgets and control expenditures by establishing the operational standards for the department. In conjunction with budget analysis, they are required to evaluate the needs for new and remodel construction of fire stations and the purchase of apparatus and equipment. Attendance to conferences and seminars on fire administration will assist them in keeping abreast of developments in the industry, ([COP], 2010).

Operationally, Fire Chiefs must be able to respond to greater alarms and direct the activities at the scene by ensuring that effective command and control techniques are in place. They must consider the input from other fire ground officers and initiate the appropriate response to mitigate the incident, oversee all suppression support activities, and ensure fire fighter safety. Through critiques of large scale incidents, target or high hazard areas can be further defined to develop recommendations to better protect life and property in the city. Consulting with the city manager, the city manager's staff, and other department heads will provide a relationship building opportunity and communication bridge for understanding fire related problems, concerns, and related fire services, ([COP], 2010; [GNT], 2005).

Fire Chiefs must also ensure the completion of administrative tasks in maintaining fire incident records, casualties and injuries, property loss, and to implement continuing public awareness and education through fire prevention programs. These tasks are essential in the effort to improve operations, turnaround times, work processes, and fire fighter safety. Ultimately, the outcome is to work cooperatively to ensure a high quality customer service, ([COP], 2010; [GNT], 2005).

As personnel advance to Assistant Fire Chief and Fire Chief positions, they move away from operational capabilities to more strategic levels of planning, recruiting, and preparing leadership within the organization. To facilitate this transition it is imperative to identify; what are the Chief Officer's roles required to unify the department?

L. Appelbaum, and M. Paese, PH.D., contrasted the day to day activities of operational managers with those who must transition into strategic leadership roles to build relationships, implement change, and strive for the achievement of organizational goals. Through extensive research, assessment, development and coaching, nine roles were identified that characterize and describe the leadership situations that most reflect the vital and important functions of today's leaders, (2003).

These nine roles have general applicability to senior fire officers and are dependent on the current situation. They include:

Navigator - Clearly and quickly works through the complexity of key issues, problems and opportunities to affect actions.

Strategist - Develops a long-range course of action or set of goals to align with the organization's vision.

Entrepreneur - Identifies and exploits opportunities for new services.

Mobilizer - Proactively builds and aligns stakeholders, capabilities, and resources for getting things done quickly and achieving complex objectives.

Talent Advocate- Attracts, develops, and retains talent to ensure that people with the right skills and motivations to meet business needs are in the right place at the right time.

Captivator – Builds passion and commitment toward a common goal.

Global Thinker - Integrates information from all sources to develop a well-informed diverse perspective that can be used to optimize organizational performance.

Change Driver - Creates an environment that embraces change; makes change happen - even if the change is radical - and helps others to accept new ideas.

Enterprise Guardian - Ensures shareholder value through courageous decision-making that supports enterprise, (Appelbaum & Paese, 2003, pg 2, ¶2).

Integration of these roles into the department's mission may be accomplished by creating an inspiring vision and leading by example, by empowering, inspiring, and energizing personnel, and by building and leading a team.

Creating an inspiring vision establishes the shared values of the organization and gives direction towards a set of challenging goals. It also supports an environment to manage change strategically by accepting the risk to pursue opportunities in creating and leading change, and by managing resistance to restructuring personnel's belief and value ideals. Fire Chiefs may set an exemplary example in actively participating in the change effort, and by sharing credit for improvements as well as taking ownership for setbacks. These efforts will demonstrate confidence, respect, and trust, (Kotelnikov, n.d.).

To empower, inspire, and energize personnel Fire Chiefs should be enthusiastic and provide a positive work environment by delegating authority, being open to ideas, and embracing the diversity and creativity of others. Straight forward and honest communication will establish clear guidelines and expectations. Emphasis should be placed on the willingness to actively listen, discuss, and solve problems, (Kotelnikov, n.d.).

Building a dedicated team will encourage cooperation, provide opportunity for involvement, and build trust in the decision making process. Coaching and positive feedback will improve the group's judgment and assist them in reaching a more informed and acceptable decision. The Fire Chief needs to monitor the team's process and lead the team, not micromanage or dictate plausible outcomes, (Kotelnikov, n.d.).

Procedure

Responsibilities throughout the fire service have changed dramatically since the mid seventies. With the adoption of specialty teams, emergency medical services, critical incident debriefing teams, and the advancement in both electronic and fire fighting technologies, today's

fire service leader must be better educated and more skilled to deal with the complexity and diversity of the organization.

To establish a relationship between the current business and leadership philosophies and the expectations of fire service personnel of a Fire Chief, I developed a Fire Service Leadership Survey, (appendix A). The survey consisted of four statements. Statement one deals with the importance of specific attributes on a person's expectations of a Fire Chief. The statement was developed from G. Roworth's, *Leadership Attributes for Business Success*, which demonstrates the close relationship between business success and leadership. G. Roworth believes that leadership skills can be learned and developed, and are essential if an organization is going to develop, (2010).

Statement two deals with the importance of a person's assessment of a Fire Chief's ability to lead the department. The statement was developed from, What-are-good-leadership-skills.com's, *Leadership Skills List*. This list of leadership skills was developed to guide leadership behavior and learning, increase acceptance to organizational values and strategies, leadership training, and to build unity, (2007).

Statement three was developed to determine the importance of a Fire Chief to have the capabilities to fulfill traditional responsibilities. The list includes the major managerial responsibilities. The list was developed from the City of Phoenix, *Job Description for Fire Chief*, (2004), and a Government of Northwest Territories, *Job Description, Fire Chief*, (2005).

Statement four deals with the significant leadership roles that transition an individual from operational management to strategic level leadership. The nine strategic roles were defined in the article, *What Senior Leaders Do: The Nine Roles of Strategic Leadership*, authored by L. Appelbaum and M. Paese, PHD, and was referenced with the expressed permission of Dimensions International, Inc., (DDI), (2003). The statement was designed to demonstrate the importance of current leadership roles as applied to the fire service.

A survey sample size of one hundred was chosen to be distributed to on duty personnel of the Irving Fire Department (IFD). The limitations of the survey are that it is a non-validated instrument, and there was no particular calculated distribution to insure a completely representative sample of the ranks, age groups, or cultural diversities. The surveys were administered to on duty personnel from April 26, 2010 through May 1, 2010.

The survey was followed up with interviews from Battalion Chief Jon Porter, Lieutenant Roy Harvey, and Captain Larry Erwin. Chief Porter is a twenty-one year veteran of the IFD and serves as secretary for the Irving Professional Fire Fighter's Association, (IPFFA). He is a proactive advocate of association members' rights, has developed numerous protocols and procedures for the association and the department, and serves as the shift operations officer for Battalion Two, C Shift.

Lieutenant Harvey is the IPFFA President and has worked diligently with city management and the city council to secure employment positions, incentives, and personnel benefits. He is a fourteen year veteran of the department and serves as the Shift Coordinator, Communications Division.

Captain Erwin served 41 years with the IFD and retired April 30 this year. He is well respected for his leadership capabilities and foresight. He trained numerous recruits at fire station seven, several of which have become new officers of the department.

These men were selected for their skill and experience in dealing with city and department leadership to advance the ideals, plans, and vision of the department. They were asked to complete the Fire Service Leadership Survey and answer the following questions pertaining to their answers: (a) how are the attributes in statement one important to your expectations of a Fire Chief; (b) how are the skills described in statement two important to your assessment of a Fire Chief's ability to lead a department; (c) how important is the capacity to

fulfill the responsibilities listed in statement three, and; (d) how can the roles in statement four facilitate a Fire Chief's ability to unify a department?

Results

As outlined in the procedures, the Fire Service Leadership Survey was administered to establish a relationship between the current business and leadership philosophies and the expectations of fire service personnel on a Fire Chief. Of the one hundred surveys distributed, ninety were completed, six were incomplete, and four were not returned. The tabulated responses for the ninety completed surveys are tabled in Appendix B. The ninety tabulated surveys were completed by thirty eight Fire Fighters, thirty six Drivers, five Lieutenants, ten Captains, and one Battalion Chief.

If modern principles are expected to be integrated into the fire service there should be a high value or agreement with the attributes, skills, responsibilities, and roles for a Fire Chief. In the first statement concerning the importance of certain attributes to your expectations of a Fire Chief, the results showed a high level of agreement. The following percentages for the answers of agree or strongly agree for each of the following attributes is as follows: vision, 83%; foresight, 91%; inspiration, 79%; standards, 83%; organizer, 80%; understanding, 90%; and measures results, 87%.

In the second statement concerning the importance of certain skills in your assessment of a Fire Chief to lead the department, again, the results showed a high level of agreement. The following percentages for the answers of agree or strongly agree for each of the following skills is as follows: integrity, 100%; strategy, 89%; communication, 94%; relationship building, 79%; persuasion, 81%; adaptability, 83%; teamwork, 86%; coaching and developing, 67%; decision making, 100%; inspection, 18%; and planning, 79%. Inspection was introduced into the skills assessment as a distracter to help determine if survey participants would recognize it as a task or function rather than a skill.

The third statement concerning the capacity to fulfill responsibilities as being essential to a Fire Chief did not show the higher levels of agreement as in the first two statements. The following percentages for the answers of agree or strongly agree for each of the following responsibilities is as follows; direct overall operations, 88%; minimize or eliminate threats to life safety, 86%; minimize or eliminate threats to property damage, 81%; minimize or eliminate threats to the environment, 77%; direct fire academy activities, 22%; efficiently and effectively use department personnel, 77%; and efficiently and effectively use department equipment, 84%. The response to direct fire academy activities was introduced as a distracter to determine if survey participants would recognize that the day to day activities of an academy should be directed by a subordinate.

The final statement showed a more general consensus of the importance that certain roles have to a Fire Chief's leadership abilities. However, navigator, strategist, mobilizer, and change driver received notable support. The following percentages for the answers of agree or strongly agree for each of the following roles is as follows; navigator, 81%; strategist, 94%; entrepreneur, 67%; mobilizer, 82%; talent advocate, 66%; captivator, 70%; global thinker, 62%; change driver, 80%; enterprise guardian, 57%.

The initial interview was conducted with Battalion Chief Jon Porter at the Battalion Two office located at 6200 Love Drive, Irving, Texas, at 7:00a, May 3, 2010. Chief Porter was first asked to complete a Fire Service Leadership Survey, and then to answer four questions relating to his survey answers.

Chief Porter's response to statement one concerning attributes were either agree or strongly agree on each item except inspiration which he gave a neutral rating. He was asked; how are the attributes important to your expectations of a Fire Chief? He gave a brief comment that certain attributes give the Chief purpose and direction, and an understanding of who they are and what is needed to accomplish the goals of the organization. The ability to clearly

visualize the direction of the department establishes the bases under which he must operate, set standards, and assess the progress towards fulfilling objectives.

In statement two concerning the skills necessary for a Chief to lead the department; Chief Porter's survey responses were generally in agreement with the exception of strategy, persuasion, coaching, and inspection which he gave neutral ratings. He was asked; how are the skills important to your assessment of a Fire Chief's ability to lead the department? He stated that he did not feel that these particular skills were of a great importance because a Chief only has to deal with a few people. He also believed that a more appropriate skill would be as a team builder rather than a part of teamwork. Exceptional ability as an effective team builder allows a Chief to be less reliant on other skills. He also commented on the fact that inspection was a duty to be performed at lower levels of the organization.

In statement three, the capacity to fulfill the following responsibilities is essential to a Fire Chief; Chief Porter's responses were generally neutral with the exception of efficient and effective use of department resources. He was asked, how important is the capacity to fulfill the responsibilities listed in statement three? He responded that directing the overall operations and efficient and effective use of department personnel and equipment were the primary responsibilities of the Fire Chief. As a department grows a Fire Chief needs to move away from the day to day operations and concentrate more on the direction of the department, and create an environment that readily adapts to changes. He believes that a Fire Chief should be a coordinator that can assemble a team capable of dealing with key issues quickly and effectively to meet the department's goals.

In the final statement, the following roles are important to a Fire Chief's leadership abilities; Chief Porter responded with a high level of agreement with the exception of enterprise guardian on which he was neutral. He was asked; how can the roles in statement four facilitate a Fire Chief's ability to unify a department? He responded that he felt these roles would bring

together a talent pool that was capable of gathering pertinent information, would listen to input from department personnel, and assimilate the information to utilize department resources more efficiently. He also sees the roles as necessary for a Chief to prepare for and respond to change.

The second interview was conducted with Lieutenant Roy Harvey at the Irving Fire Department dispatch office located at 345 West Irving Blvd., Irving, Texas, at 9:40a, May 3, 2010. Lieutenant Harvey was first asked to complete a Fire Service Leadership Survey, and then to answer four questions relating to his survey answers.

Lieutenant Harvey's responses to statement one concerning attributes were all, strongly agree, with the exception of foresight which he rated neutral. He was then asked; how are the attributes important to your expectations as a Fire Chief? He held a strong belief that vision was the core attribute because it clearly directs the priorities of the Chief in developing an action plan, that in turns holds the Chief accountable for the direction of the department. Such plans are an essential tool in negotiating with city managers and the council. He views the remaining attributes as desirable to effectively coordinate the activities of others in accomplishing the plan's goals.

In statement two concerning the skills necessary for a Chief to lead the department; Lieutenant Harvey's survey responses were exceptionally strongly agree. He was asked; how are the skills important to your assessment of a Fire Chief's ability to lead the department? He sees these skills as essential in building the trust that will allow others to follow a new direction and adapt to changes in the department. Open communication and exchange of ideas give personnel a feeling of ownership in the process of establishing a course of action.

In statement three, the capacity to fulfill the following responsibilities is essential to a Fire Chief; Lieutenant Harvey's responses were again exceptionally strongly agreed. He was asked; how important is the capacity to fulfill the responsibilities listed in statement three? He did not necessarily agree that the Chief should be directly involved with each aspect of the

responsibilities, but that the chief should have a strong working knowledge of the managerial considerations of his subordinates to effectively deal with problem areas. Strong experience will help predict the probability and extent of these problems.

In the statement four, the following roles are important to a Fire Chief's leadership abilities; Lieutenant Harvey responded with strong agreement to navigator, strategist, global thinker, entrepreneur, and change driver. He was neutral in the remaining roles. He was asked; how can the roles in statement four facilitate a Fire Chief's ability to unify a department? He stated that as an efficient navigator the Fire Chief would not leave problems unattended so as to escalate into unmanageable situations. This is tied directly to being a good strategist in developing future plans should alternative courses of action be necessary. He believes that the fire service in general is moving away from just being a labor intensive fire fighting system into a sophisticated organizational structure that must consider more and more outside influence.

The final interview was conducted with Captain Larry Erwin at his home located at 1501 Myers Road, Irving Texas, at 8:50a, May 6, 2010. Captain Erwin was first asked to complete a Fire Service Leadership Survey and then to answer four questions relating to his survey answers.

Captain Erwin's responses to statement one concerning attributes were agree or strongly agree with the exception of organizer which he rated neutral. He was then asked; how are the attributes important to your expectations as a Fire Chief? He responded the depth of these abilities would establish a Fire Chief's credibility, and determine the extent to which that individual would be able to gain acceptance and compliance to department goals. Foresight and inspiration are essential in building long-term commitment. Captain Erwin also felt that the organization's operations, or best way of completing the activities to achieve organizational goals, would be best served by those actually assigned to complete those activities.

In statement two concerning the skills necessary for a Chief to lead the department; Captain Erwin's survey responses were agree or strongly agree with the exception of persuasion, coaching and developing, and planning. He was asked; how are the skills important to your assessment of a Fire Chief's ability to lead the department? Captain Erwin stated that together these skills define a Fire Chief, and establish his credibility to function and lead the department. If a Chief is not skilled in each of these disciplines when he assumes leadership of the department, he will need to demonstrate his capacity to develop them in order to get the department behind him. We, as a group, need to know that the Chief is capable and is working for the department.

In statement three, the capacity to fulfill the following responsibilities is essential to a Fire Chief; Captain Erwin's response was agree or strongly agree with the exception of direct overall operations which he rated neutral, and direct fire academy activities which he rated disagree. Captain Erwin believes that directing operations or department activities is a functional role best suited to operational personnel through his Assistant Chiefs. The Chief's primary responsibility to operations is to ensure that he has an understanding of the current situation, and that he is able to effectively oversee the utilization of the department's resources.

In the final statement, the following roles are important to a Fire Chief's leadership abilities; Captain Erwin responses were generally neutral with the exception of navigator, strategist, and change driver which he rated agree or strongly agree. He was asked; how can the roles in statement four facilitate a Fire Chief's ability to unify a department? Captain Erwin suggested that Irving is moving towards the ideal that day to day department problems are to be investigated and remedied by Battalion and Assistant Chief's. This allows the Fire Chief to concentrate his time on the issues of the department rather than the individual. The Chief must extend his examination of the department's needs from a local level, and determine where its resources or lack of resources can benefit or be beneficial in the broader sense of mutual

cooperation. With the high level of diversity within the department, the Chief must be able to adapt quickly to changes and make the most of limited opportunities.

Discussion

After examining the Fire Service Leadership Survey, I found a high level of agreement among fire department personnel for the attributes suggested by G. Roworth (2010) that are expected to be integrated into the fire service. Fire service leaders must develop the personnel attributes of vision, foresight, inspiration, standards, organizational capabilities, understanding, and being able to measure results that will be accepted, and will guide and encourage growth in the organization. These attributes are also supported by Chief Porter's comments (personal interview, May 3, 2010) that these attributes give purpose and direction to clearly visualize the direction of the department, set standards of performance, and assess the progress towards fulfilling department goals.

Further support was established from Lieutenant Harvey (personnel interview, May 3) that vision was a core attribute that clearly directs the priorities of the Chief in developing an action plan that establishes direction and accountability. Captain Erwin (personal interview, May 6), also believes that the depth of these abilities will establish a Chief's credibility, and determine the extent to which an individual would be able to gain acceptance and compliance to department goals.

As suggested by R. Gorham, (n.d.) intense effort should be devoted to understanding the needs of department personnel in gaining acceptance and compliance with department goals through good judgment, prompt decision making, impartial and consistent justice, and initiative. In addition, a Fire Chief must be dependable, have tact, integrity, and endurance, and portray a favorable impression of unselfishness, courage, knowledge, loyalty, and enthusiasm.

In the second survey statement concerning the importance of certain skills, again there was a high level of agreement from department personnel that, integrity, strategy,

communication, relationship building, persuasion, adaptability, teamwork, coaching and developing, decision making and planning are the guidelines to a Chief's leadership behavior and learning, (What-are-good-leadership-skills.com, 2007).

Although Chief Porter (personal interview, May 3, 2010), was in general agreement, he did not feel that these particular skills were of great importance because a Chief only has to deal with a few people. He does believe that a more important skill is team building. An exceptionally effective team builder would have to be less reliant on other skills, and could accomplish department goals through delegation to others. However, Lieutenant Harvey (personal interview, May 3, 2010) sees the skills as essential in building the trust that will allow others to follow a new direction and adapt changes to the department. Open communication and exchange of ideas give individuals a sense of ownership in the process of establishing a course of action.

Captain Erwin (personal interview, May 6, 2010) expressed that these skills establish a Chief's credibility to function and lead the department. If a Chief is not disciplined in each of these skills when he assumes leadership of the department, he will need to demonstrate his capacity to develop them in order to gain support.

It is apparent that the personal attributes and skills that identify key characteristics of a successful leader also define the expectations of the department for a Chief Officer, and that they will be honest, forward looking, competent, inspiring, and intelligent, (Shead, 2007).

I then examined the results for statement three, expectation of the community and the department for a Chief Officer's fundamental responsibilities, by looking at job descriptions from the city of Phoenix, Arizona, (2010) and the Government of the Northwest Territories, (2005). There appears to be a great deal of similarity in job descriptions for the responsibilities associated with the position. Essentially they include managing and directing all fire fighting operations, prevention initiatives, and understanding fire related problems, concerns, and

related fire services. Fire Chief's must also ensure the completing of administrative tasks in maintaining records, implementing public awareness, and fire prevention programs.

Although the survey showed strong support for capacity to fulfill these responsibilities as being essential to a Fire Chief, results did not show the higher levels of agreement as in the attributes and skills. Chief Porter, (personal interview, May 3, 2010) explained that directing the overall operations and efficient and effective use of department personnel and equipment were the primary responsibilities. As a department grows a Fire Chief needs to move away from the day to day operations and concentrate on the direction of the department, and create an environment that readily adapts to changes. This conception was shared by Captain Erwin (personal interview, May 6, 2010) in that he believes that directing the functional roles of the department are best suited to operational personnel and his Assistant Chiefs. The Fire Chief's role or primary responsibility to operations is to have a thorough understanding of the current situation, and be able to effectively oversee the utilization of the department's resources.

Lieutenant Harvey (personal interview, May 3, 2010) strongly agreed with the Chief's responsibilities, but that a Chief should not be directly involved with each aspect of those responsibilities. A Chief should have a strong working knowledge of the managerial considerations of his subordinates to effectively deal with problem areas, and to help predict the probability and extent of these problems.

In the final statement concerning the importance of certain roles to a Fire Chief's leadership responsibilities, the responses were generally lower with the exception of navigator, strategist, mobilizer, and change driver. L. Appelbaum and M. Paese, PH.D., (2009) suggest that to transition between operational and strategic leadership roles, leaders must build relationships, implement change, and strive for the achievement of organization goals.

V. Kotelnikov, (n.d.), brings these ideals together in that creating a common vision establishes the values of the organization and gives direction towards a set of goals. To

empower, inspire, and energize personnel Fire Chief's should be enthusiastic and provide a positive work environment. Building a dedicated team will encourage cooperation and provide for involvement to build the trust necessary to utilize leadership roles in the decision making process.

Chief Porter (personal interview, May 3, 2010) feels that these roles would bring together a talent pool that was capable of gathering pertinent information that would listen to input, and would be utilized to allocate department resources more efficiently. He also believes that the roles are necessary for a Chief to prepare for and respond to change.

Lieutenant Harvey (personal interview, May 3, 2010) sees the Chief as an efficient navigator that would not leave problems unattended as to escalate into unmanageable situations. Being a good strategist would be beneficial in developing future plans should alternative courses of action be necessary. Lieutenant Harvey also believes that fire service in general is moving away from just being a labor intensive system into a sophisticated organizational structure that must consider increasing outside influence, and that the department must be able to deal with those situations on an executive level.

Captain Erwin (personal interview, May 6, 2010) also supports the idea that a Fire Chief should be an excellent navigator and strategist. The Fire Chief should be concentrating on the department rather than the individual, and must extend his examination of the department's needs from a local level to include the department's interaction and responsibilities with surrounding communities. These roles will also assist in dealing with the complexities of the high level of diversity growing in the department.

Recommendations

Unifying a diverse and complex organization where fundamental differences in attributes, traits, and skills exist is a challenge that must be faced by the Fire Chief. A thorough

understanding of these complexities is a must to be pro-active in developing and establishing departmental programs. The demonstration of personal attributes such as vision, foresight, inspiration, and setting specific standards for everyone to follow will encourage growth and unity in the organization. Key elements of unifying a department is patience and understanding. Old habits and traditions die hard.

To begin, job descriptions for a Fire Chief should go well beyond the managerial capabilities of the Fire Chief to orchestrate the day to day activities of the department. They should include an evaluation of the leadership roles needed to serve the department and community as well as the managerial capabilities that are expected. Establishment and adherence to an action plan is essential in defining the direction of the department and establishing accountability. The Chief must encourage on-going dissemination of information to support the efforts to unify the department.

As the Fire Chief identifies and exploits opportunities for new services he must also consider the effects on personnel and how they perceive the merits of the program. He must align the current capabilities and resources in a timely manner for efficiency and effectiveness. He must also seek out, develop, and encourage the most qualified personnel to initiate such programs to help motivate the entire department.

More than ever the Fire Chief needs to remain confident and responsive to department personnel as he formulates operational objectives into a decided advantage for the department. Leading the department through the decision making process requires dedication, concentration, knowledge, and skill. He must prepare department personnel for change at a pace that members can assimilate without additional stress, even if that change is fast paced.

The integration of the Chief's leadership roles directed towards unifying the department in obtaining the vision and mission objectives must be well documented and thoroughly understood. A formal succession plan should be an important consideration to maintain current

initiatives, and to provide a framework to integrate new information and perspectives. The fire service industry must be made aware that they are no longer just a labor intensive service, but an emerging partner in the community's alliances.

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Appendix A

Fire Service Leadership Survey

Below are four statements regarding your opinions on the expectations, skills, responsibilities, and roles for today's fire service Chief Officers. Please take enough time to understand and accurately record the importance you feel about each statement.

Answer key: 1 strongly disagree; 2 disagree; 3 neutral; 4 agree; 5 strongly agree

Statement 1

The following attributes are important to your expectations of a Fire Chief.

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| a. Vision – clearly visualize the direction of the organization to full development | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| b. Foresight – creates opportunities for services community involvement. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| c. Inspiration – inspires others to participate in achieving the departments goal | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| d. Standards – sets the standards for acceptable performance. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| e. Organizer – determines the most appropriate way and methods to perform work. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| f. Understanding – believes that the organization must meet the needs of department personnel and motivate them. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| g. Measures results – accurately assesses and interprets the progress of activities that lead to fulfilling the department's goals. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Statement 2

The following skills are important to your assessment of a Fire Chief's ability to lead the department.

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| a. Integrity | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| b. Strategy | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| c. Communication | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| d. Relationship Building | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| e. Persuasion | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| f. Adaptability | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| g. Teamwork | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| h. Coaching and Developing | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| i. Decision Making | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| j. Inspection | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| k. Planning | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Statement 3

The capacity to fulfill the following responsibilities is essential to a Fire Chief.

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| a. Direct overall operations. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| b. Minimize or eliminate threats to life safety. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| c. Minimize or eliminate threats to property damage. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| d. Minimize or eliminate threats to the environment. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| e. Direct fire academy activities. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| f. Efficiently and effectively use department personnel | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| g. Efficiently and effectively use department equipment | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Statement 4

The following roles are important to a Fire Chief's leadership abilities.

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| a. Navigator - Clearly and quickly works through the complexity of key issues, problems and opportunities to affect actions. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| b. Strategist - Develops a long-range course of action or set of goals to align with the organization's vision. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| c. Entrepreneur - Identifies and exploits opportunities for new services. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| d. Mobilizer - Proactively builds and aligns stakeholders, capabilities, and resources for getting things done quickly and achieving complex objectives. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| e. Talent advocate- Attracts, develops, and retains talent to ensure that people with the right skills and motivations to meet business needs are in the right place at the right time. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| f. Captivator –Builds passion and commitment toward a common goal. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| g. Global Thinker - Integrates information from all sources to develop a well-informed diverse perspective that can be used to optimize organizational performance. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| h. Change Driver - Creates an environment that embraces change; makes change happen – even if the change is radical - and helps others to accept new ideas. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| i. Enterprise Guardian - Ensures shareholder value through courageous decision-making that supports enterprise. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Please indicate the following:

Rank: _____

Years of Service:

1 – 5 _____

6-10 _____

11-15 _____

16-20 _____

21-25 _____

>25 _____

Appendix B

Fire Service Leadership Survey Summary of Responses

Answer key: 1- strongly disagree; 2- disagree; 3- neutral; 4- agree; 5- strongly agree

Statement 1

The following attributes are important to your expectations of a Fire Chief.

	1	2	3	4	5
a. Vision					
Responses	0	0	15	44	31
b. Foresight					
Responses	0	0	8	47	35
c. Inspiration					
Responses	0	0	19	48	23
d. Standards					
Responses	0	0	15	30	45
e. Organizer					
Responses	0	3	15	35	37
f. Understanding					
Responses	0	0	6	40	44
g. Measures results					
Responses	0	0	12	46	32

Statement 2

The following skills are important to your assessment of a Fire Chief's ability to lead the department.

	1	2	3	4	5
a. Integrity					
Responses	0	0	0	5	85
b. Strategy					
Responses	0	0	10	43	37
c. Communication					
Responses	0	0	5	25	60
d. Relationship building					
Responses	0	0	19	44	27
e. Persuasion					
Responses	2	0	15	63	10
f. Adaptability					
Responses	0	0	15	39	36
g. Teamwork					
Responses	0	0	13	29	48

Statement 2 continued:	1	2	3	4	5
h. Coaching and Developing Responses	0	0	30	36	24
i. Decision making Responses	0	0	0	26	64
j. Inspection Responses	30	15	29	16	0
k. Planning Responses	0	0	19	22	49

Statement 3

The capacity to fulfill the following responsibilities is essential to a Fire Chief.

a. Direct overall operations. Responses	1 0	2 4	3 7	4 40	5 39
b. Minimize or eliminate threats to life safety. Responses	1 0	2 0	3 13	4 37	5 40
c. Minimize threats to property damage. Responses	1 0	2 0	3 17	4 35	5 38
d. Minimize or eliminate threats to the environment. Responses	1 0	2 6	3 15	4 45	5 24
e. Direct fire academy activities. Responses	1 5	2 40	3 25	4 20	5 0
f. Efficiently and effectively use department personnel. Responses	1 0	2 0	3 21	4 35	5 34
g. Efficiently and effectively use department equipment. Responses	1 0	2 0	3 14	4 40	5 36

Statement 4

The following roles are important to a Fire Chief's leadership abilities.

a. Navigator Responses	1 0	2 0	3 17	4 41	5 32
b. Strategist Responses	0	0	5	38	47
c. Entrepreneur Responses	0	0	26	55	5
d. Mobilizer Responses	0	5	14	58	13

Statement 4 continued:	1	2	3	4	5
e. Talent advocate Responses	0	10	21	40	19
f. Captivator Responses	0	0	28	51	11
g. Global thinker Responses	3	10	21	35	21
h. Change driver Responses	9	0	17	35	29
i. Enterprise Guardian Responses	7	5	27	35	16